Capitol Punishment . . . By Art Buchwald

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New Doubts About John Birchers

THE JOHN BIRCH Society has made one of the most unique offers ever proposed to a politician. They have told Ronald Reagan, the movie star, who wants to be Governor of California, that the Birch Society will either support Mr. Reagan or attack him, "whichever he thinks will do the most good."

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Mr. Reagan said he was sorry that the offer was made public. No one knows if he was sorry because he hadn't made up his mind yet as to what he wanted the Birch Society to do, or whether he was sorry that the Birch Society got into his political act.

In either case it gives the average person a great deal to think about. In the past most of the things the Birch Society have been for the majority of Americans have been against. Now there is great doubt whose side the Birchers are on.

FOR EXAMPLE, one of the Birchers' biggest bugaboos has been Chief Justice Earl Warren. The Society has been leading the move to impeach him.

There was nothing wrong with this, except how do we know that the members of the John Birch Society haven't made a secret deal with Justice Warren? They know that their attack on on the Chief Justice will make the rest of the country support him, and it has certainly been to Justice Warren's interest to have the Birchers on the other side.

The Reagan offer makes one wonder if the John Birch Society has not made a deal with President Johnson, President Eisenhower, Secretary McNamara, Dean Rusk, Sen. Kuchel and other people they have bitterly opposed as a means of secretly supporting them.

Some observers believe that the John Birch Society might in fact be a left-wing organization hiding behind a right-wing facade.

What could be a better strategy than to pretend you were right-wing and, by attacking the left-wing policies of the country, gain far more support for them?

THE JOHN BIRCH Society has been first and foremost in their attacks on communism and socialism at home and abroad. In the past no one has questioned its fervor in this area. But now that we know that the John Birchers are willing to attack someone they believe in, there is a question whether their attacks are sincere. Could it be possible that . . . no, it would be too horrible to imagine. But the Communists have done horrible things before.

And yet I for one can't believe it. Maybe I'm naive and a dupe but on the basis of what I know and have read about the John Birch Society . . . and yet there is this Ronald Reagan offer. Could they be putting Reagan on?

The thing to do is not to make any judgments about the John Birch Society at this time.

We must watch their every move. If they continue to attack Justice Warren, President Eisenhower, fluoridation and the Democratic Party, then I think we ought to turn the whole thing over to the House Un-American Activities Committee.

It would be interesting to know who is paying their bills.

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